

Joseph Melkonian

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EDUCATION

Harvard University

PhD Candidate in Public Policy (Economics Track), ABD

Expected May 2027

University of California, Davis

B.A. Economics, with Highest Honors

B.A. International Relations, with Honors

June 2019

FIELDS

Labor

International Development

REFERENCES

Gordon Hanson

Professor in Urban Policy

Harvard Kennedy School

gordon.hanson@hks.harvard.edu

Rema Hanna

Professor of South-East Asia Studies

Harvard Kennedy School

rema.hanna@g.harvard.edu

Gabriel Kreindler

Assistant Professor of Economics

Harvard University

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FELLOWSHIPS

Herbert C. Kelman Fellow, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University

2026–27

Doctoral Fellow, Harvard Mellon Urban Initiative

2025–26

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Economics of Migration in MENA (Sophomore Tutorial), Harvard College, Sole Instructor

2025–26

Intermediate Microeconomics, Harvard College, TF and Head Proctor for Dr. Maxim Boycko

2023–25

Introduction to Econometrics, Harvard College, TF for Dr. Gregory Bruich

2024

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant, Malcolm Weiner Center for Social Policy (HKS), Gordon Hanson

2023–26

Research Assistant, Evidence for Policy Design (HKS) & Morocco Employment Lab, Rema Hanna

2022

Research Assistant, Insurance Initiative, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, Richard Rosen

2019–21

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

41st Meeting of the European Economic Association, University College Dublin, Ireland

August 2026

European Development in a Historical Perspective – Ph.D. & Postdoctoral Conference, Harvard University

May 2026

19th International Conference on Migration and Development, Yonsei University, Seoul, South Korea

April 2026

JOB MARKET PAPER

Shock Propagation through Migrant Networks: Evidence from the Spain-Ecuador Migration Corridor

International migration entails human and financial flows that can expose low-income communities to foreign economic shocks.

This paper studies the Ecuador-Spain corridor during the Global Financial Crisis to investigate the impact of foreign labor

market shocks on migrant origin communities. I leverage international survey and census data to craft an emigrant shift-share

instrument estimating subnational Ecuadorian exposure to Spanish regional labor market downturns. Spanish shocks

propagate to Ecuador, with more exposed Ecuadorian regions experiencing significant increases in return migration and

reductions in remittance inflows. Spanish labor demand shocks impact Ecuadorian labor markets, as older segments of the

population increase labor supply, wages for some less educated workers fall, and male construction employment declines.

PAPERS IN PROGRESS

Emigration by Exodus: Minority Emigration and Development in North African Decolonization

I investigate the near-universal emigration of Sephardic Jewish minorities and European colonists surrounding North African decolonization as natural experiments related to the impact of emigration on development, leveraging archival census tabulations and contemporary survey and census microdata from the Maghreb. My research would contribute to the economic literature on the effects of emigration on labor markets and on economic development, the economic contribution of ethnic minorities, and the impact of historical exposure to ethnic minorities on social and political norms and beliefs.

Migration and “Global Socialization” in MENA

While societies in the Middle East and North Africa are generally characterized as socially conservative, they have experienced high degrees of emigration to culturally dissimilar societies, begging the question whether migrant corridors contribute to global socialization in the MENA context. After creating a subnational migration matrix based on the Facebook Social Connections Index and standardizing Arab Barometer survey data, I leverage subnational variation in migration to investigate relationships between migration links and cultural norms.

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Coordinator, Graduate Student Workshop in Economic and Social Policy, Harvard Kennedy School	2023–24
Coordinator, Graduate Student Workshop in Political Economy & Rational Choice, Harvard University	2022–23

GRANTS & RESEARCH SUPPORT

Mid-Dissertation Grant, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University	2026
Urban Research Grant, Harvard Mellon Urban Initiative	2025
Urban Research Grant, Harvard Mellon Urban Initiative & Mahindra Humanities Center	2025
Research Scholars Program, Harvard Center for International Development	2024–25
Foreign Language and Area Studies Grant (Moroccan Arabic), Harvard Center for African Studies	2022

AFFILIATIONS

Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University, Graduate Student Associate
Harvard Center for International Development, PhD Affiliate
European Economic Association, Member
American Economic Association, Member

SKILLS AND OTHER

Software: STATA, $\text{\LaTeX}$
Languages: English (Native), French (Advanced), Moroccan Arabic (Intermediate), Modern Standard Arabic (Beginner)
Citizenship: USA